

**Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Southern District of Texas**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Four sentenced for intricate \$1M counterfeiting scam**

HOUSTON – The leaders and two others have been ordered to federal prison after passing more than \$1.3 million in counterfeit checks in Houston and Louisiana, announced U.S. Attorney Ryan K. Patrick.

A jury convicted Harold Chaney, 49, Missouri City, Oct. 3, 2019, following a three-day trial and approximately four hours of deliberation. Also sentenced today were Charmine Godine, 46, and Marcus McNeal, 40, both of Missouri City, along with Frank Chaney, 55, Houston, who had all previously pleaded guilty for their roles in the scheme.

Today, U.S. District Judge David Hittner ordered Harold Chaney, one of the leaders, to serve a 235-month sentence. The other leader – Godine - received a 240-month-term of imprisonment, while Frank Chaney and McNeal received respective terms of 85 and 160 months. All will also serve three years of supervised release following their sentences.

At the hearing, the court heard evidence that showed the group was responsible for attempting to steal more than \$6 million in merchandise and passing over \$1.3 million in counterfeit checks.

Harold Chaney and Godine headed the group who purchased expensive goods from retail stores using a sophisticated counterfeiting scheme.

McNeal provided stolen checking account information, which he obtained as a courier for a legitimate business. Harold Chaney and Godine used the stolen account information and stolen identities to create counterfeit checks using a special computer program and special printer paper.

Other members of the group, such as Frank Chaney, used the counterfeit checks to purchase computers, appliances and construction materials at retail stores. The group then sold the items to customers on the black market.

Authorities also found them with hundreds of stolen identifications, which they used to establish criminal identities.

All four Harold Chaney, Frank Chaney and McNeal have been and will remain in custody pending transfer to a U.S. Bureau of Prisons facility to be determined in the near future.

The Secret Service, Houston Police Department and Harris County Sheriff's Office conducted the investigation as part of the Houston Area Fraud Task Force.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Jim McAlister is prosecuting the case.